



# Employee News

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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## EAP

Employee Assistance Program

**1-800-526-3485**

**24 / 7 Assistance**

**[www.solutions-eap.com](http://www.solutions-eap.com)**

## DMR

**[www.ct.gov/dmr](http://www.ct.gov/dmr)**

### Central Office

(860) 418-6000

### North Region

(860) 263-2500

### West Region

(203) 805-7400

### South Region

(203) 294-5049

### STS

(203) 586-2000

## "Ask the Commissioner"

If you have a question for Commissioner O'Meara, you are invited to e-mail Joan Barnish at [joan.barnish@po.state.ct.us](mailto:joan.barnish@po.state.ct.us). Watch for your response in future newsletter editions.

Newsworthy articles should be forwarded to your regional **DMR Employee News** contacts:

North/Linda Schaefer

West/Eunice Rivera

South/Jolie Cresimano-Goss

## Working Together by Robert Wood

*"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. Alone so little is done, together so much is done."*

As a parent of a 45-year-old daughter with Down Syndrome, I strongly believe that this quote tells the whole story. I also believe that these simple words refer to all DMR employees and parents of individuals receiving services from the department.

Why? Because as we all know, if we don't work together nothing much gets done.

During the many years I have been working with DMR employees, I have been constantly reminded of your dedication and commitment to improving the lives of our sons and daughters. I personally want to thank you for that dedication and encourage you to continue the good work you do.

As you well know the greatest challenge we have today is maintaining the quality of life for the individuals served by the department. FORConn and the Council on Mental Retardation has always put this issue on the front burner. We have met recently with legislators and the Governor's Office to try and improve the Access to Quality Oral Health care. We have had some success and believe within in the next year we could see some changes.

In the meantime, thank you DMR employees, for caring, your dedication and helping to provide quality care to our sons and daughters.

*Mr. Wood is a member of the Governor's Council on Mental Retardation and President of FOR Conn.*

## Case Management Supervisor Goes Beyond



The Silver City Friendship Self Advocacy Group recently raised money from the Meriden Daffodil Tag Sale to help those less fortunate. Supported by DMR South Region Case Management Supervisor Siobhan Morgan, the group purchased groceries with their proceeds and donated them to St. Joseph's Church, one of many food pantries in the Meriden community. The small group of individuals who raised over \$50 wanted to help the less fortunate and had heard that the church's pantry is always in need. Thanks. Siobhan!

*The Silver City Friendship Self Advocacy Group*

## A Lifelong Dream: Woman gives \$2,000 to K-9 Unit *By Julie Wernau, Waterford Times*



*Waterford Police Officer Stephen Bellos, Waterford K-9 Unit canine Frido and Maryann Henrickson*

*This story was first published in the Waterford Times on 12/23/2005. DMR would like to thank the reporter, Julie Wernau and the Times for sharing this article.*

**Waterford** - When Maryann Henrickson isn't washing laundry at her job at Haven Health Care in Waterford, she's usually glued to Animal Planet. That's where she saw a dog at a police station's K-9 unit get shot, and that's when she decided to do something, said Kim Jones, Henrickson's case worker for her Department of Mental Retardation supportive living program in New London.

Last week, Waterford Police Department's K-9 unit and Police Commission treated Henrickson to a hero's welcome after she donated \$2,000 to the unit, enough to buy a bullet-proof vest for Frido – a 2-year-old German shepherd in Waterford's K-9 unit. The department's other canine officer, Blitz, had a vest donated by Southwest Elementary School students last year after they sold enough popcorn to purchase the nearly \$1,000 protective covering.

"Your donation has made this town a safer place to live and work," Chief of Police Murray Pendleton told Henrickson. The commission presented her with an 8-by-10 photograph of Frido and a certificate and letter as tears welled in Henrickson's eyes. "I'm going to try to do New London if I can," Henrickson said. "I work in Waterford, so I started here."

Henrickson has been an employee at Haven Health for 32 years, where she started out as a nurse's aide. She made an outright donation from her savings, without stipulation. As a special treat, the officers brought Blitz and Frido to visit Henrickson so that she could play ball and pet the dogs. For Maryann, said Debi Buckley-Pomerenke another case worker, meeting and helping the dogs was a lifelong dream come true. "Maryann

is a very special person," she said.

With the extra money leftover, Officer Stephen Bellos, assigned to the K-9 Unit with Officer Dan Lane, said they will buy a HOT-N-POP for their police vehicle. The device alerts the officer if it gets too hot for the dogs and can also be used to pop the door open when an officer needs a dog in an emergency. Bellos said the device already came in handy in another vehicle after Lane was caught in a pinch.

"The Waterford K-9 Unit has been a community-police partnership for more than two years," Pendleton said. "...This two-person unit has become a real credit to the police organizations." Bellos said a large gift like Henrickson's is rare as she has asked for nothing in return. He asked that anyone else interested in giving to the K-9 Unit contact Waterford Police at (860) 442-9451.

## Cultural Competency Committee

The West Region Cultural Competency Committee recently hosted a workshop titled "A World of Difference, Cultural Competency in the Workplace." The workshop, presented by the Anti Defamation League of Connecticut, addressed through a variety of interactive exercises, issues such as respect and dignity, developing basic diversity skills, cross-cultural communication strategies and the importance cultural identity has to our everyday lives.

The highly sought after event had to be limited to 60 after more than 100 West Region private and public employees requested attendance at the event. A duplicate workshop is being offered by DMR Central Office on February 9 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM at the Keeney Center in Wethersfield.

The West Region Cultural Competency Committee's mission is to increase awareness around issues related to cultural diversity and competency. One of the ways the committee attempts to do this is by hosting two training events per year with the second event planned for May 2006.